

Art. Fauré
31 Chanson Violon .

C. E. WERLING

Greg

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MARCH
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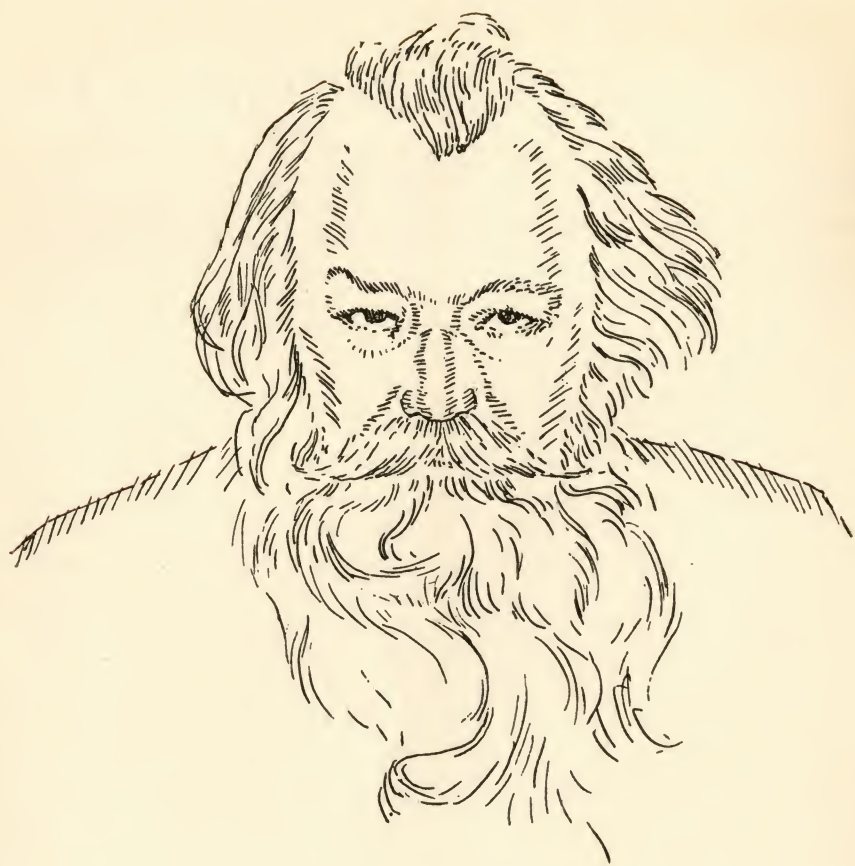
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Vol. II

MARCH, 1931

No. 1

GREETING! Just a year ago with plenty of enthusiasm and some confidence we began the first issue of *Disques* with this word of welcome. At that time we had no idea that it would carry entirely around the world into every civilized country except Russia. Our thought when it was first written was simply to welcome a few hundred readers, mostly in America. As we begin the second volume, we greet several thousand subscribers in many lands who have within their hearts the common love of music. To you, wherever your home may be, we send our felicitations and appreciation for the splendid support which you have accorded *Disques*, with the hope that this volume may be of such quality as to merit your continued confidence.



Our readers seem to be just as much interested in our progress as we are ourselves, and when we have good news we want to share it with them. We doubt if any publishers ever started the second year of their magazine with greater enthusiasm or confidence. We have very many good reasons for being optimistic. Suffi-

cient advertising contracts have been secured to insure its issuance for at least another year. We are continually adding to our list of contributors outstanding writers on musical subjects—this month Winthrop Parkhurst, who is also the subject of an editorial note in this issue. The Index to Volume I has been issued and received with seemingly unqualified approbation. A large number of readers have sent their copies of the first volume to be bound, and a goodly number have ordered complete bound volumes. It seems that quite a few readers feel it is worthwhile to place our little publication in their libraries for future reference. The latest reports from the record manufacturers are that they will promote the sale of records, perhaps not so broadly, but very much more intensively than ever before—not so many records will be released, but we are promised that each one will be intelligently chosen, adequately performed and recorded with scrupulous care. When we consider all of these good signs we just cannot help but be enthusiastic. We just know that *Disques* is going forward.

We are planning during the next year to increase the number of articles and to add to our list of contributors several more outstanding writers on musical subjects. The splendid comments which we have had on the work of Isaac Goldberg, Laurence Powell, Joseph Cottler and others whose articles have appeared recently would warrant, it seems, our devoting more space to such contributions, even if it becomes necessary to shorten the record reviews slightly. The illustrations and decorations appearing in the first volume have been greatly appreciated by our readers. Edward C. Smith, to whom all credit should go for designing *Disques*, contributing to its pages, and selecting for us the drawings during the past year, will continue as art editor. This insures, we feel sure you will agree, the same high standard to which our readers have now become accustomed. Mr. Smith's frontispiece entitled "Jazz," which appeared in the October issue, was entered in the Seventh Annual Exhibition of Advertising Art, held under the auspices of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Art Directors Club, in Philadelphia, from January 22 to February 4, 1931. It received second award. We find that those who listen also read and are immensely interested in the latest books on musical subjects. With the co-operation of the publishers we will expand our book department, with the thought in mind of reviewing every important book dealing with music. We shall maintain the same page size and general layout throughout Volume II. We have made a few slight changes in typography, which we believe will improve the general appearance and make for easier reading. The suggestions of our readers have always been very valuable. May we have more of them?



If there is any question as to the vast amount of worthwhile music that has been made available on records during the last twelve months, the answer will be found by glancing through the Index to Volume I. In perusing its twenty-four pages you will find that we have reviewed over 1200 compositions by 236 composers performed by something over 600 artists. The composers with the greatest number of compositions recorded and released during the year are as follows: Wagner (51), Bach (48), Mozart (46), Chopin (27), Debussy (27), Beethoven (25) and Brahms (23). The composers who are living today are headed by Ravel with 17 compositions on the discs followed by Richard Strauss (15), Milhaud (13) and Honegger (11). It is interesting to note that if there were only available the records which were issued during the last year, one would have no trouble in selecting a very comprehensive record library. Certainly more has been made available for the record collector in the last twelve months than in any like period in the whole history of the industry.



WINTHROP PARKHURST, whose "Exit the Interpreter" appears in this issue, is the author of the *Anatomy of Music*, published last year by Knopf and reviewed in the August issue of *Disques*. He was born in New York City and has lived there most of his life. He studied the pianoforte under his uncle, Henry Holden Huss, and organ and theory under his father, Howard Elmore Parkhurst, in 1916 succeeding the latter as organist and choirmaster of Madison Square Church and later

occupying the same post at the historic St. Mark's in-the-Bouwerie. During 1920-21 he was on the critical staff of *Musical America*. Mr. Parkhurst's writings, creative as well as critical, have appeared in many of the foremost journals of this country and England, and one of his plays, *The Beggar and the King*, has been reprinted in three anthologies. Recently he has been engaged in musicographical research for the Columbia University Press. Several of his compositions have been published; among these a male a cappella chorus, *Nirvana: A Hymn to Oblivion*, is his favorite. His interest in recorded music dates back many years; so long ago as 1915, indeed, his "Music: Canned and Fresh" was published in the late *Art World*.

INDEX, BINDING AND BOUND VOLUMES

A very comprehensive index (24 pages) to the first volume of *Disques*, printed on the same stock as the magazine, is now available. As only a limited number of these has been printed, our readers who desire one should send 50 cents in stamps to the publishers without delay.

Arrangements with John C. Haynes, bookbinder, 1110 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A., have been made for the binding of the first volume of *Disques* at very special prices. Bound in full green buckram, including index, \$2.25, or in one-half black morocco leather, including index, \$3.00. In either case the title *Disques* and the volume number will be stamped in gold upon the back. It will not be necessary for those who send their copies to be bound to purchase an index, as the bookbinder will have the indexes on hand, and one is included in the price for binding. All copies should be sent direct to the bookbinder, and remittance in full should be sent to him. The bound volume will be returned carriage prepaid.

A limited number of back copies of *Disques* has been reserved for binding. They will be bound with indexes and will be offered for sale at \$3.75 in full green buckram or at \$4.50 in one-half black morocco leather, carriage prepaid throughout the world. Orders for these should be forwarded direct to, and remittance made to the order of, the publishers, H. Royer Smith Company, 10th and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription price \$1.50 per year (Outside U. S. A., \$2.00 per year). All subscriptions should be sent and all checks drawn to the order of H. Royer Smith Co., 10th and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A. As an index will be published at the end of the year you should specify that your subscription start with the March issue (Vol. II, No. 1). Back numbers may be had at 15c each postpaid.

CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotopia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Exit the Interpreter

By WINTHROP PARKHURST

The highly expensive sobs to which, for many months past, the American Federation of Musicians has been treating itself in the public prints will hardly succeed in luring back the moving finger, or in washing out the syllables it continues writing. The utter futility of this effort on the part of the 140,000 members of that organization is, in fact, very close to the very painful. Whatever else one may feel, one is shocked and saddened by the sight and sound of so vast a band of executants disappearing under a tidal wave of the inevitable—and disappearing the more swiftly, ironically enough, in that their mouths are perilously wide open on hymns of glory.

It is to be doubted whether the public at large is impressed greatly. It is to be doubted whether one reader out of fifty thousand is genuinely perturbed by those harrowing full-page advertisements in which Richard Wagner peers out wistfully from a sardine can. The prevailing attitude of the public mind, if I do not misinterpret that noble organ, is simply, on the right hand, passive contempt for jobless job-hunters who pose as æsthetes, and, on the left hand, passive thankfulness that Vincent Lopez has gone celluloid. This recent development in our cinema castles, unworthy though it may seem of serious comment, is nevertheless important because symptomatic. For the invasion of our theatres by mechanically produced music is the augury of a greater invasion which soon will follow. And, furthermore, the current groans of the American Federation of Musicians is an augury of grief which tomorrow will be rescored for a much grander orchestra.

II

Eventually, according to the custom of the world, people will grow used to what has happened; and after they have grown used to it they will like it. By that time (simply for the convenience of round numbers I select the year 2000 A. D. for this millennium, though seventy years more are possibly generous)—by the year 2000 A. D., as I say, the end of the interpreter's day will seem meet and natural; for by that time, if not before it, the past and present habit of considering the interpretative musician an integral factor in making music will have vanished, simply because the need of his presence will have evaporated. Prior to that onrushing hour which I am prophesying, however, dismay will fill the breasts of many people—not only the breasts of performers but also the breasts of the majority of the world's auditors. Anticipating such a period of grave discomfiture, one inclines first to the fancy that it is natural; one next wonders, however, whether it should seem so; and at last, after looking over the field calmly, one realizes that the feeling is entirely foolish. Supposing, as I am supposing, that interpretative musicians the world over will be taking their last curtain call with this century, what is there in such a prospect to dismay the public? Setting aside the fiscal aspects as ignoble, what shall we say of the æsthetic?

Two answers, and only two, can be given: (1) music, mechanically reproduced, is acoustically faulty; (2) music, as a living art, requires the mediation of flesh-and-blood performers. These two answers are the only two answers which any

musician, without waxing vulgar, can advance seriously. Since both answers are susceptible of rejoinder, retorts to them follow serially hereunder.

III

(1) Taking the first point first, music must be judged by its effect, and only by its effect, upon the aural mechanism. How music sounds, not how music is made, is of sole importance. Let the statement be written in *italic capital letters* across the heavens. At the present hour, it is true, the aural mechanism is not content with canned music, for some of the vitamins get lamentably lost in the canning process. I do not deny this: I affirm this. Being a writer who has nothing in the world to sell but rows of syllables, I am free to state the facts without commercial bias. Nothing I venture to say will touch my pocket. I can afford to be candid in all directions. I therefore repeat that, as matters now stand, some vitamins do get lost in the canning process. Indeed, I will go further by saying that not only are some vitamins lost: various poisons, in the form of inadvertent acoustical obbligati, are added. Every musician knows this well, and every engineer in every phonograph company knows it also. It is incontestable, and so obvious that the admission suggests idiocy, that the mechanical record of a musical performance departs from that musical performance in two directions: by omitting certain nuances in the original, and by supplying certain nuisances not in the original. Shortcomings of both kinds are plain and audible. But any one who will compare the labors of the last decade with the labors of yesterday is bound to concede a vast improvement within that period; and that those defects which still remain are fated to join their brothers, eventually and whole-heartedly, is virtually certain. Thanks to the introduction of the photoelectric cell into the science of converting sound-waves into light-waves, and then back again, we already are measurably nearer acoustical perfection than Leon Scott's phonautograph, back in 1855, was to the 1920 type of the talking-machine. In view, then, of the really tremendous advance which has been made—first between 1855 and 1920, and then between 1920 and 1930—so-to-speak perfection may presently be looked for with complete confidence. And when it does loom up clearly on the horizon—which it almost certainly will do in the present century—the first answer goes plump overboard without a life-belt.

(2) Coming now to the second point, we reach what may appear to be a tougher problem. If, as I have said, interpretative musicians as a class are to disappear by the twenty-first century, who will perform the living music that will then be rendered? The rejoinder to this second point, which already has been elegantly whispered, may sound radical; but only a sentimental clinging to archaic custom (itself simply the product of dire necessity) will clash with what this deponent now deposes. Therefore, with no fear of astounding the judicious, let the rejoinder to our second question be given bluntly: There will be no need of interpretative musicians in the next century because the entire classical, romantic, and neo-romantic repertory, previously performed by the leading artists of this planet, will be safely and eternally inscribed on the public records. These records will be acoustically perfect in the full human meaning of the adjective; they will be available to all auditors the world over; and, finally, they will be so rich in interpretative variety that additional readings would be supererogatory and an impertinence.

Offhand, I confess, this sounds startling. But would a situation such as the one I have just sketched be aught but the natural consequence of our mechanical premise? Obviously, upon a little thought, it would not be; and a brief, concrete illustration will show this clearly. Let us suppose, for example, that acoustically perfect methods of reproduction had been at the command of all the interpreters of the last century. Suppose we were now able to attend to the complete repertory and the perfectly recorded art of such a galaxy of pianists as Liszt, Thalberg, Chopin, Rubinstein, von Bülow, Busoni and Paderewski; of such violinists as Sarasate, Joachim, Wilhelmj, Ysaye and Kreisler; of such conductors as Richter, Mahler, Muck, Nikisch, Mengelberg and Toscanini: what, in such a situation, would promptly happen? Only one thing, very plainly, could possibly happen; and that would be the execution of all executants—nay, less painfully but more summarily, it would be the prevention of the very birth of all executants. When half a dozen of the most distinguished interpretations of Beethoven's opus 111 are available for consumption at your fireside, do you seek out the inconveniences of a concert hall; or do you lean back, twirl a doo-dad, and press a button? When each interpretation is acoustically perfect, and when six different interpretations are offered you, do you crave flesh and blood and an inferior seventh? Not if you are a musician in search of music; not even if you are a human being in search of pleasure. You simply twirl the doo-dad and press the button—for there, servants of your exigent ears, stand all the outstanding interpreters of seven decades, waiting to offer you their richest wares in their fullest variety.

IV

With sentimental objections to this virtually certain state of affairs in the coming century every reader is undoubtedly familiar. The American Federation of Musicians has venally done its bit, even musicians and music critics have astigmatically done their bit, to foster the flesh-and-blood fallacy. Nor can it be denied that these campaigns have been partly successful. They are successful to the precise and unhappy extent that all the foregoing remarks are not platitudes. They will remain partly successful, moreover, as long as an archaic custom, inspired by actual necessity, is kept alive by that situation which gave it substance. The need of interpretative musicians, in other words, has heretofore rendered performers indispensable. But when performers no longer are indispensable they become, to speak kindly, walking relics. Relics they therefore will become in short order. And from that nondescript state their farewell passage, downward and outward, will be sure and sudden.

It is conceivable, of course, that a certain amount of music, worthy of being interpreted, will be yet created. And if this does come in time, volunteers will doubtless arise to take care of it—men agog and aflame with their particular and private views of a masterpiece. The cosmos could probably handle a cosmic crisis. But such a crisis I am bold enough to name a rarity. And, in any case, those rarely needed volunteers who would spring to the musical colors in an emergency after a small body of first-rate compositions had at last accumulated—these, too, would be transient performers only, functioning through a mechanical medium also. In every case they would enter the picture only to pass out of the panorama (unwillingly if they were merchants, willingly if they were musicians) that self-same hour.

In offering a view of the probable musical developments of the next seventy-five years, I am not blind to certain difficulties which I have touched lightly. For example, as far as popular music is concerned, I am not entirely confident that a small band of continuously performing musicians would not be considered desirable machinery. Training such a troupe would certainly be easier, and hiring them would be less expensive, than inventing and operating and keeping in repair some intricate mechanism for translating musical notes directly into sound-waves. The invention of such a mechanism I deem quite possible, but I frankly do not regard it as highly probable. On the other hand, needless to say, the general situation would be unaltered even by the presence of the musical troupe just mentioned; for, although performing continuously, they would never play in public at all, confining their efforts to recording (alas, to perpetuating also) all current jingles.

V

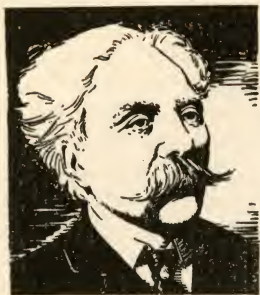
Nor does my prophecy deny the possibility that a certain amount of informal music-making may continue. Music, after all, has several aspects; and one of those aspects is social. I see no reason to suppose that music-lovers would never gather together and play and sing as a matter of refined diversion. For the core of the future musical situation, as I see it, does not necessarily involve the extinction of all flesh-and-blood performers. What it does involve, as plainly as tomorrow supplants today and today yesterday, is the extinction of the decaying belief that such men are indispensable to the art of music. That formerly they were indispensable is unquestioned; that they still have current value is undisputed; but that their importance has waned perceptibly within the past two decades, and will wane even more drastically in the next two decades—this leaves no room for dispute or question. If $2 + 2 = 4$ in the future, mechanical refinements in the art of recording music, and a bursting library which those refinements must produce inevitably, will, according to all laws of logic, seal the consequence. The premise flows instantly into the conclusion.

To some music-lovers these reflections may seem melancholy. There are a good many persons who deplore every advance made by science, every new accomplishment of a mechanical era, every fresh invasion of the world of art by machinery. When the pianoforte was invented the great-grandfathers of these persons, I have no doubt, went out behind woodsheds and wept bitterly: it was appalling to think that a musical instrument actually used the mechanical principle of the lever. However—apart from the fact that arguing with destiny is wasteful exercise—submitting to the inevitable gracefully is a particularly easy task, with respect to musical conditions of the future, since those conditions invite the true musician's deepest gratitude. Next to the invention of the printing-press, as an implement of culture, must be placed the invention of the phonograph. He that hath ears to hear its voice of musical prophecy will not smile at the wildest boast man makes for it.



Gabriel Fauré

By RICHARD GILBERT



If you will inquire of a French musician the composer, aside from the insurmountable Debussy, whom he considers the most important of the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present, he will invariably mention Gabriel Fauré. The way in which the musicians of France today esteem this master actually amounts to idolatry. Fauré, in his long career, impersonated the evolution of French music to a great extent. Although many features of his development have been emphasized to a greater degree by particular groups or individuals, Fauré's anticipation of later achievement was steady and unvarying. Writing in *La Revue Musicale*, October 1, 1922, M. Emile Vuillermoz declares: "Fauré was not a simple precursor, a pioneer whose path was enlarged by better equipped explorers. He was a musician who, a quarter of a century in advance of the other composers, spoke freely a prophetic language with an ease, a virtuosity and an elegance which have never been surpassed. He possesses so strong a personality, in spite of his discretion, that he could escape all the influences from which his contemporaries did not always succeed in freeing themselves. In the midst of the Wagnerian epidemic, when Saint-Saëns, Franck, Massenet, d'Indy, Chabrier and Duparc did not actually succumb, but were affected by the contagion, he remained refractory toward the virulent romantic microbe, and preserved all his intellectual independence and all his racial sanity. During the epoch when the pupils of César Franck, notwithstanding their demonstrative nationalism, were ingenuously Teutonizing our art, Gabriel Fauré, without professions of faith, without dogmas and without a catechism of industry, was the veritable guardian of our national traditions."

Gabriel Urbain Fauré was born at Pamiers (Ariège) in 1845. His father noticed his prodigious musical gifts while he was quite young and had him enrolled in Niedermeyer's School of Religious Music in Paris. When Gabriel was ten years old his father, fearing that his modest income would not provide for the long course of study, informed Niedermeyer that he intended removing the boy from school. Whereupon the master consented to keep him free of charge, so impressed was he by the young student's talent. The studies were continued under Niedermeyer, Dietsch and Saint-Saëns until, in 1866, he accepted a post as organist at Rennes in Brittany. Fauré spent four years in Rennes where he composed the greater part of his first collection of songs, some of which already bore the impress of his later individuality. He returned to Paris in 1870 where he had no difficulty in procuring another organ position. From that time on Fauré was organist of several churches from the Notre Dame de Clignancourt to the Madeleine. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out Fauré enlisted and served throughout. It is said that he was prouder of the medal bestowed upon him for bravery in action than of the decoration of the Legion of Honor which he received later. After peace was declared Fauré was, successively, professor at the Ecole Niedermeyer, professor of composition at the Conservatoire (1896) and principal

of the latter institution (1905). After this last date countless official distinctions were conferred upon him, culminating in the altogether unusual honor of an "Homage National" which was paid to him at the Sorbonne in October, 1922.

Fauré's music first came before the public in the early seventies. In 1876 his Violin Sonata in A Major inaugurated the series of his fine and significant chamber music works. This work is played for the gramophone by Jacques Thibaud and Alfred Cortot (V-8086 to V-8088). The sonata is full of sparkling gaiety and occasionally shows a depth of reflective poetry. It precedes Franck's more celebrated work by ten years. While it will hardly compare with the Franco-Belgian's work in scope of conception or depth of emotion, it is nevertheless faultless as regards its precision of structure and the clarity of its development.

II

The songs of Fauré occupy a most important niche in the treasure house of the French *chanson*. It would be difficult to find his superior in the recent song literature of any country. One writer claims that, in his lyrics, Fauré stands as an unequalled interpreter of certain French traits. This composer has created nearly a hundred songs whose texts almost constitute an anthology of French poetry, beginning with Victor Hugo and Gautier, through Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle, Sully Prudhomme, Verlaine, Richepin, Silvestre, Grandmougin, Villiers de Lisle-Adam, to Henri de Régnier, Albert Samain and many others. Some of these exquisite songs recorded are: *Poème d'un jour—Rencontre; Toujours; Adieu* (Poems of Grandmougin) sung by Charles Panzéra (V-P765); *Clair de Lune* (Poem of Verlaine) sung by Jane Bathori (C-D13097), and Ninon Vallin (O-188.578, with *L'Automne* by Fauré-Sylvestre on the reverse). *La parfum imperissable* (Poem of Leconte de Lisle) is sung by Reynaldo Hahn (C-D2029); *Le Soir* (Poem of Samain) finds phonographic reproduction by Mme. Malnory Marseillac (O-165.555) with the familiar *Après un Rêve* occupying the reverse side. *Chanson de Shylock* is sung by M. Villabella (O-188.558). David Devriès and Roger Bourdin record *Les Roses d'Ispahan*; the first, a tenor, couples with it Duparc's *L'Invitation au Voyage* (O-123.553); Bourdin, a baritone, adds *Lydia*, also by Fauré, to his disc (O-188.634). Marcelin, tenor, sings with exquisite nuance and delicate feeling *Dans les ruines d'une Abbaye* and *Le Fée aux Chansons* (V-P838). Several more Fauré songs are recorded, either by La Voix de son Maître or Odéon, Paris, and French Columbia supplies several versions of a few songs already mentioned in the regrettably incomplete list above. Fauré has been treated with deep respect by the recording interpreters of his songs.

It is difficult to find an unsatisfactory rendition by any of these French singers. Edward Burlingame Hill, eminent American authority on French music, notes quite appreciatively that "the essence of Fauré's gift as a song composer lies in the ingratiating originality of his melodic ideas, the masterly adjustment of his harmonic support to the mood of the poem, and the felicitous background supplied by the pianoforte accompaniment."

Fauré composed but two works in large dramatic form: *Prométhée*, a lyric tragedy in three acts, and *Pénélope*, a lyric drama in three acts. From these works only three excerpts from the latter opera have been recorded. They are: *Je l'attends*, *Minerva le protégé* and *C'est sur ce banc, devant cette colonne* (O-188.-

619); and *Vous n'avez fait qu'éveiller dans mon sein* (O-123.590—containing *La Letter* [Act I, Scene 2] from Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*). These are sung by Germaine Cernay, soprano.

The incidental music to Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* was composed about 1898 for a London performance of the drama. *Prélude*, *Fileuse* and *Sicilienne* of the suite are excellently played and recorded by Albert Wolff and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (PD-66725 and PD-66726). The music has an immense charm and an immediately captivating appeal.

It is said that Fauré's pianoforte music as a whole furnished the key to many of his characteristic traits. A profoundly poetic sentiment and a delicate use of modulations which never obscure the tonal center of gravity are among these chief traits. Indeed, Fauré foreshadowed much of the later French piano music. Unfortunately, little of this piano music has been recorded. The *Ballade*, for pianoforte and orchestra, was written in 1880 and forecasts the Fauré of later years. It is recorded by Magda Tagliaferro (with orchestra) in three parts with a delightful *Impromptu*, Op. 34, on side four. This *Third Impromptu* was composed in 1883; another recording of it is available by Léon Kartun (O-171.095). A later and more distinguished recording of the *Ballade* is that recent French Columbia release of its playing by Marguerite Long, with orchestra conducted by Philippe Gaubert, two 12-inch discs: C-LFX54 and C-LFX55.

III

Fauré excelled in the composition of chamber music. Intermittently, from the creation of the early violin and piano sonata in 1876 to the last farewell work of 1924, the string quartet, he produced work distinguished by a careful workmanship and great originality of idea. There are two quartets for piano and strings, two quintets for piano and strings, none of which are recorded. There are smaller works for piano and violin: a *Berceuse* (Isolde Menges, V-W735 and Jeanne Gautier, O-166.039), an *Andante*, and a second *Sonata*. For the 'cello Fauré wrote, principally, an *Elégie* (Maurice Maréchal, C-DX49), a *Petite Pièce*, a *Romance*, a *Papillon* (Gaspar Cassado, PD-95028) and *Sicilienne*, a *Sérénade*, and two sonatas. There is a lovely *Fantaisie* for flute and piano which should do well recorded, a Trio for piano, violin and violoncello, and numerous works for various instruments in smaller forms. The Quartet was the last work from the master's aging hand. It was composed in 1924, the year in which he died. This work is one of the masterpieces of French quartet writing. It will go down as a worthy companion to the Franck, Debussy, Ravel and Milhaud works. It brings to a close the beautiful series of chamber works, piano pieces, songs and a few orchestral gems, from the never-tiring and always youthful pen of a great modern master of music. The Finale contains something of the youthfulness so fresh and apparent in the early sonata. Yet throughout there broods a profound melancholy. It is as if, conscious of his advancing age and inevitable end, Fauré regretted deeply the necessity of leaving a world he loved so well. Here is a confession of a supreme *adieu*; the gravity of the late-period Beethoven is mingled with the Gallic objectiveness of inspiration. The recordings of this Quartet, recently released in France and now available in America, become a precious document of Fauré's consummated art. The Krettly Quartet has given us a remarkably finished interpretation and the recorders have

outdone themselves in giving permanency to the reading by MM. Krettly, Costard, Broos and Navarra, and faithful reproduction of the original tone.

Roger-Ducasse has said: "More profound and mysterious than Saint-Saëns, more varied than Lalo, more spontaneous than d'Indy, more classical than Debussy—and I add, in spite of my old enthusiasm for the composer of *Le Roi malgré lui*, more warm-hearted than Chabrier, Gabriel Fauré is the master *par excellence* of French music, the finished specimen of our art, the perfect mirror of our musical genius."

FAURE RECORDS

Sonata in A Major. Six sides. Jacques Thibaud (Violin) and Alfred Cortot (Piano). Three 12-inch discs (V-8086 to V-8088). \$2.50 each.

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Manufacturing Music Lovers

By RICHARD J. MAGRUDER

The recent incredible developments and improvements made in means of reproducing recorded music, most judicious people seem now to agree, have transformed the phonograph from an inadequate, raspy toy into a respectable and highly useful musical instrument. Once abused and damned whole-heartedly by musicians and music critics, not to mention the hordes of harassed apartment house dwellers, it is now given serious consideration by such eminent critics as Ernest Newman, Emile Vuillermoz, Lawrence Gilman and Olin Downes, all of whom have come out in print strongly in favor of mechanical music.

Lawrence Gilman, indeed, has even gone so far as to say that, if given the choice between a fair actual performance and a good recorded performance, he would unhesitatingly choose the latter. So, for that matter, would anyone else with decently cultivated ears, but at the time Mr. Gilman's remark was made such statements from critics of any standing were somewhat rare.

Within the past few years the scientists have accomplished almost unbelievable things in improving and refining reproduction, so that recent records, played on a good electrical machine, give a fairly plausible and realistic approximation of the original performance. Perfection, of course, has not yet been attained, but it is only around the corner, and so it is idle to denounce the phonograph on that score, just as it is idle to denounce all actual performances because they, too, fall short of utter perfection. And such an enormous quantity of music—good and bad, naturally, but an astonishingly large proportion of it extremely good—has been recorded that the catalogues now actually bulge and drip with desirable items. Many of them, moreover, are seldom if ever heard in concerts, so that the recorded performances, being the only ones generally available, are doubly valuable. It is thus no longer possible to make exhilarating sport of the phonograph (as it certainly was only a few years ago) on the grounds that records of good music are unobtainable.

Like every other genuinely useful instrument, the phonograph has been received by a certain portion of the public—as yet, unfortunately, a regrettably small portion of the public—with immoderate enthusiasm, an enthusiasm, however, that is amply justified when the virtues of the instrument are thoroughly considered. A great many claims accordingly have been advanced for the phonograph, and many of them have been based on solid facts. But a few of these claims have been put forward a bit recklessly, without due reflection. At the first glance they may seem very true and wonderful; but on close analysis they prove to be essentially so silly and groundless that it seems proper and, in fact, necessary to examine them in order to determine, so far as possible, just how much truth they hold. For it is the earnest desire of a great many very intelligent persons, just now, to see the phonograph established on a firm basis, to see it given the dignity that it undoubtedly deserves; and reckless claims made for the instrument can quite easily work far more harm than good. Over-praise of any object commonly tends to make that object slightly ridiculous; and the phonograph, being a machine and a relatively new and not very lovely one at that, cannot safely afford, at this stage of its progress, being put in a ridiculous light. Its place in modern civilization is unfortunately still a precarious

one. Some years must elapse before the public as a whole accepts it as serenely and unquestioningly as it now accepts the automobile, the aeroplane and Mr. Mencken's celebrated thermostat.

II

For example, it has been argued, with considerably more than ordinary heat, that the phonograph is not only of incomputable value to musicians and music lovers, but that it is also actually making red hot music lovers of people who otherwise would go through life dismally ignorant of the important things Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Strawinsky and Richard Strauss have to offer.

Now the phonograph incontestably has manifold advantages, and these are of an extraordinarily high order. It has brought good music into homes where good music was formerly considered all that music *not* played by saxophones and trumpets with derby hats on the ends of them. It has made it possible for people isolated in remote corners of the world to enjoy superlative performances by, say, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Bayreuth Festival artists, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the Flonzaley Quartet, the incomparable Casals-Thibaud-Cortot combination and a host of others. It has made the study of music, for those wise enough to utilize it (the phonograph, of course) properly, appreciably less difficult, more rapid and infinitely pleasanter. It has made a substantial portion of the world's best music available in readily accessible and convenient form. It has even caused several important critics to reach the conclusion that it will have a marked effect upon the music of the future, and Mr. Winthrop Parkhurst, in fact, outlines elsewhere in this issue precisely what he believes that effect will be. All this the phonograph has accomplished with brilliant success, and no one with a sound and complete knowledge of the facts could reasonably deny it.

But there is one thing the phonograph has not done, and, it can safely be said, never will do, and that is simply this: It has not developed musical appreciation in unmusical people. It has not made a single genuine music lover out of those who formerly disliked music, despite the eloquent claims made daily, and not excluding the claims of those who declare that they themselves underwent such an astonishing metamorphosis through the magical wonders of the phonograph.

That it has awakened and developed a latent love for music in people who, until the phonograph was introduced, had no opportunity for hearing good music and so were ignorant of their passion for it is, of course, indubitable. But it is equally certain that these people would sooner or later have discovered good music for themselves, phonograph or no phonograph. The phonograph simply hastened and facilitated the process. It didn't, properly speaking, make music lovers of them. They already were music lovers, even though they were unaware of the fact.

It is generally accepted as axiomatic today that music lovers are born, not made. It is either in a person or it isn't. A certain amount of cultivation, of course, is necessary, but there must be something to begin with; and that something, obviously enough, must be a genuine love for music.

To ask of the phonograph, then, that it make music lovers out of unmusical people is an excessively large order; it is patently unfair, not to say absurd. Certainly, no intelligent person is justified in asking of a machine that it accomplish

something that Brahms himself, through the medium of his music and the assistance of a first-rate interpreter, is incapable of accomplishing. If a person doesn't like the Brahms First Symphony in the concert hall, after hearing several competent performances of it, it is hardly likely that he will enjoy a recording of the work, however good. If he professes to like a recording of the work and to dislike an actual performance—and one runs across such cases every day—then you can be pretty certain that it is not so much the music that engages and pleases him as the advantage of being able to hear it with his shoes and coat off, his shirt open at the neck, a properly filled bottle convenient at his elbow, and his wife and children at the movies. Under such ideal circumstances a person ought to like almost anything, so long as there are some order and harmony to it.

III

Yet this extravagant and wholly false claim, to wit, that the phonograph is daily making passionate music lovers out of unmusical people, is frequently brought forward these days, and with an imposing display of importance and authority. The belief seems to be accepted placidly, like breadlines, the current remedy for unemployment, and so far, despite its palpable absurdity, it appears to have gone quite unchallenged.

That the phonograph has done no such thing is not just a pretty theory. It is a demonstrable fact. Recent events in the record industry prove it. The complaint heard from all sides that record sales are dropping shows abundantly that mechanical music, despite its many salient virtues, has never performed anything so miraculous as making a music lover out of an unmusical person. The reason record sales are dropping, aside from the very natural decrease growing out of Mr. Hoover's delightfully ubiquitous Prosperity, is simply that the people who, several years ago, bought records under the impression that they liked them have now very wisely dropped the habit and are turning instead to something else less expensive—perhaps to the radio or to backgammon or to tree-sitting or to one of the other amusements Americans are so ingenious at devising.

The vast majority of the people who buy records today can be depended upon to buy records for the rest of their lives. They are, with few exceptions, genuine music lovers. Those whose lack of interest and support now are causing some gloom among the sales forces of the manufacturers and dealers were music lovers only by a colossal stretch of the imagination. Because they bought good records it was too hastily assumed that they liked good music. They bought the records only because of the noise contained on them, and one sort of noise pleased them quite as much as another. They had heard, somewhere or other, that Bach's noise or Beethoven's noise or Strawinsky's noise was agreeable and elevating and laudable, and so, anxious to do the proper thing, they bought records of Bach's, Beethoven's or Strawinsky's music. It impressed the neighbors—momentarily—but impressing the neighbors is a relatively easy matter, and it can be achieved in various ways, some infinitely less expensive and trying than buying phonograph records. Learning about music through phonograph records seemed a short cut to culture—like reading fifteen minutes a day—and the public is notoriously an easy prey for such pretty schemes, whose only fault is that they don't work.

Actually, of course, these people were far more interested in their phonograph machines than they were in their records. The records were simply an excuse, something to justify their fascination in a piece of mechanism. Babbitt was so roundly scored for his interest in his car that the public naturally has become a bit wary in revealing a too absorbing interest in a piece of machinery. Records served admirably to hide this interest. Thus, ostensibly in an effort to improve their machines, they spent considerable time and money on all sorts of idiotic and fantastic devices. New kinds of needles, new sound boxes, new tone chambers—anything new in these things immediately arrested their attention. One should, of course, allow any phonograph owner a certain amount of time and effort to improving his machine, but when this time and effort are carried to the preposterous lengths that they are carried, for example, in England, one seriously doubts whether this has much to do with music. If these people were interested only in improving their music, it seems reasonable to suppose that they would hire a competent mechanic to attend to the mechanical details and spend the time thus saved in improving their knowledge of music.

IV

That men are notoriously fascinated by small mechanical details is a securely established fact. That men are also fond of noise in almost any form is similarly well known. Well, then, is it any wonder that hundreds of men suddenly became profoundly interested in the phonograph? It is an incomparable plaything, full of tricky little mechanical devices, and it makes noise enough to satisfy any reasonable appetite. Add to this the fact that the phonograph is capable of producing noise that the best authorities agree is noble and fine and inspiring, and you have a pretty good reason for accounting for the instrument's popularity. Women, as everybody knows, take little or no interest in mechanical things. It is a significant fact that the vast majority of the women who, several years ago, began buying records still buy them today and in all probability will buy them again tomorrow. As much cannot be said for the men.

There is another factor that can be taken into consideration, although, of course, it applies only to a small proportion of these people. It is more a question of simple psychology than anything else. It is a well known fact that the average man likes to see himself always at the center of and grandly dominating all situations. Seeing a moving picture show or a play, the average man instantly associates himself with the hero of the piece. Reading a novel, he immediately associates himself with the most appealing and virtuous character in the novel. Recent developments in the world of music have cast a brilliant spotlight upon the conductor. They have made him a dominating, an enviable, even a heroic, figure in the eyes of the too easily impressed. To them he assumes all the gaudy attractions of a popular moving picture star.

Thus we have "shadow conducting," which used to be an extremely popular sport with a certain class of phonograph record buyers—incidentally, the same class whose interest in records is now either only luke-warm or stifled altogether. (These are the people, it is important to remember, who claim to have been made music lovers through the good graces of recorded music.) "Shadow conducting" simply means standing in front of a phonograph while a record is playing, waving the arms about

solemnly, and going through all the motions of a conductor. This arm-waving and face-making; it is hardly necessary to say, can have only one useful purpose, musical or otherwise: *i.e.*, to instruct the musicians of a symphony orchestra in their interpretation of a work. When it is carried over into the home, it becomes supremely absurd; it loses its only purpose, and becomes about as important, so far as music is concerned, as the children playing with their blocks. Precisely why the habit is so popular, of course, none but "shadow conductors" can answer satisfactorily, but it is possible to make a pretty good guess. These people derive, it seems only logical to assume, a peculiar sort of pleasure from this wild arm waving and gesticulating. Working themselves up to a mild frenzy, they imagine themselves on a podium in front of a large orchestra, behind them a vast and admiring audience. Having seen Stokowski's graceful and trim back, they mentally change places with him, and much of their pleasure from their records derives from this rather than from any real musical source. Is this impulse a strictly musical one? Has it, indeed, anything whatsoever to do with music? It may have, of course, but so, too, may Mr. Calvin Coolidge surprise us all by substituting a fresh, lively, subtle idea for his usual harmless platitude, or group of platitudes—he has been known to get three or four in the limited space at his disposal—in the *New York Herald Tribune* tomorrow morning.

V

It would perhaps be a gross exaggeration to say that any appreciable proportion of phonograph users practice "shadow conducting." But it would not be an exaggeration to say that a great many people "shadow conduct" mentally, and derive just as much pleasure, which we have already seen is not a musical one, as full-fledged "shadow conductors" derive. In either case they are in much the same predicament, to use a well worn but still effective analogy, as the cow gazing longingly at the Bull Durham sign.

All this has been brought into the argument simply because it is one of the ways these people made it easier for themselves to endure listening to phonograph records. They form a large proportion of those who protest that the phonograph has changed them from violent music haters to enthusiastic music lovers. They are largely responsible for the silly claim that the phonograph can put a love for music into places where there is only a strong dislike for it.

These people may have been converted into what are loosely called "gramophiles," but certainly not into music lovers; the term "gramophile" does not necessarily imply a love for music. The phonograph has many estimable uses, but making music lovers out of unmusical people is assuredly not one of them. The fact, everything considered, is not an altogether regrettable one; nor, indeed, is it in any sense a reflection on the phonograph. If it has caused record sales to drop perceptibly, it has at least removed an undesirable element from the record buying public, and in the end that will have a favorable effect upon the phonograph's status in modern civilization. It will add immeasurably to the dignity of the instrument.

New York Letter

NEW YORK, February, 1931.

Lily Pons

While arranging to see Mme. Pons, her husband warned me that he must do most of the talking, since Madame was extremely tired due to a recent attack of grip and a performance at the Metropolitan in *The Barber of Seville* the preceding evening—an unfortunate combination. Once arrived in their hotel suite, however,



Mme. Pons was so inspired with enthusiasm about her work that soon she was interrupting and adding and vivaciously commenting till her husband good-naturedly retired behind a barrage of correspondence, from which he emerged from time to time at Mme. Pons' "But, dear, you must do the talking."

Mme. Pons is extremely attractive in manner and appearance. She is tiny, less than five feet tall. She is not frail, however, this recent surrender to the wave of flu microbes which swept over the Metropolitan being one of her rare illnesses. "Give me a little woman for great strength," she claimed. "I am never ill." And she tapped the wooden mantel behind her. She has great brown eyes, sparkling, intelligent and sympathetic. She adores pets and has just bought a canary which she calls "Métro," the name of the Paris subway. Her husband says she would keep an elephant in the apartment if she could devise a method for getting him in.

Her success has been sudden, overwhelming and unexpected, and her story is as romantic as a fairy tale. At thirteen she studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire, where she won a first prize, but she never took a voice lesson in her life until just about five years ago. She was always singing, of course, and accompanied herself, but in her mind the accompanying came first. After she left the Conservatoire, she became an actress and for two years she played ingenue parts at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris. Then she married and left the stage. It was her husband who urged her to study singing, which she did at first for her own pleasure, and it was her husband who suggested that she sing in opera. "So he took me from the theater and gave me back again to the theater," she remarked with a smile.

She began singing in the cities and towns of France and Belgium. At this time Odéon heard of her and invited her to record for them. The first trial records proved so successful that they were sold, and later she made others. These include selections from *Rigoletto*, *Lakmé*, *La Bohème*, *The Barber of Seville*, *The Magic Flute* and *Il Seraglio*, and Proch's *Variations*.

One night about a year ago she was singing in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Montpellier, a town in southern France. Zenatello, the tenor, chanced to be in the audience. He was completely enchanted, and would almost have kidnapped Mme. Pons if she had not agreed to come to America for an audition at the Metropolitan.

This audition occurred the twentieth of last March. Otto Kahn, Gatti and others were delighted, and her engagement was approved of then and there. While she was here last March, she and her husband accompanied Zenatello and his wife, Maria Gay (the former Metropolitan star), to Camden, where they visited the Victor studios. Victor authorities asked her to sing for them. These records were a failure, being over-amplified. She signed a contract with the Victor Company, however, and a few weeks before her début here on January 3 she made some more records, this time highly successful ones, which were released the day after she sang Lucia at the Metropolitan and took the critics and the public by storm.

Mme. Pons and her husband are intensely interested in recording activities. They find that the registration and reproduction of music have reached a point of perfection that is amazing and marvelous in the extreme. They thoroughly realize, too, the great importance of phonographic music and all it has to offer to musicians and public alike, for Mme. Pons gave a tea in their apartment at which they entertained forty phonograph dealers. "They brought with them cameras that were simply gigantic," said Mme. Pons, "and they took several pictures." As to her own personal taste in records, she most enjoys the works of the symphony orchestras, but she is also much enamored of jazz records. "My wife is absolutely crazy about all syncopated music," said her husband. In Paris, they have a Columbia machine, and here they have a Victor. Mme. Pons says she is frightened to death when recording. "I would far rather face an audience of six thousand people than sing to that little black microphone," she confessed. But after ten minutes or so she recovers and gets along very well. She uses the Coué method of auto-suggestion; it helps her to combat her nervous temperament—helped her in fact at the time of her audition here. Mme. Pons receives a great many letters and other comments on her recordings. One young cadet at Annapolis wrote that he had just heard the Victor recordings of *Lucia* and that he was thrilled through and through. "They are so exquisite, so beautiful," he wrote. "Sometimes it makes me sad that I love music, and especially opera music, so much. Because of that, I am obliged to give up a great deal." Her husband translated the letter for Mme. Pons—who speaks no English—and she was touched and pleased.

She has achieved this enormous, triumphant success and is now only twenty-six years old.

CATHARINE ARBENZ



ORCHESTRA



BRAHMS

B-90114

to

B-90119

SYMPHONY NO. 4 in *E Minor*, Op. 98. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Max Fiedler. Eleven sides and

QUARTET IN A MINOR: *Quasi Minuetto*, Op. 51, No. 2. One side. Buxbaum String Quartet. Six 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 24. \$9.

Miniature Scores: Eulenburg Nos. 656 and 425.

C-LX58

and

C-LX59

IMPORTED

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL *Overture*. Three sides and

SYMPHONY NO. 1 in *C Minor*: *Un poco allegretto*, Op. 68. One side. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Scores: Eulenburg Nos. 656 and 424.

No one denies the present well-deserved popularity of the Brahms symphonies. Played constantly in nearly all the concert halls, they yet manage somehow to retain much of their original freshness and appeal, and the dullness that generally clings to a piece too often performed seems to have escaped them. Lawrence Gilman, indeed, has estimated that their current popularity is almost as firmly established and widely spread as that of the Tchaikowsky works in the same form. And a casual examination of the programs of recent years reveals this astonishing estimate to hold considerable truth.

Yet these symphonies, with perhaps the exception of the First, which has been recorded electrically four or five times, have certainly not been over-recorded. All of them, to be sure, are available in at least two versions; but few will claim that these duplications are superfluous or unnecessary. In the Brahms symphonies, as in all genuine master works, there is plenty of room for duplication and difference of interpretation, so that we, for one, shall not grow irritable until there are at least half a dozen competent versions of the works. Brunswick's release of the Fourth is therefore eminently just and fitting, and, incidentally, reflects considerable credit on those who are responsible for the company's singularly felicitous choice of works to be repressed from the Polydor catalogue.

The Fourth, like many another masterpiece, did not fare so well at first. Indeed, so warm an admirer of Brahms as Hanslick remarked, after hearing the work for the first time in a performance on two pianos by Brahms and Ignaz Brüll: "You know, I had the feeling that two enormously clever people were cudgelling each other." Many of Brahms' friends, too, fearing a dismal failure, entreated him to withhold the work from the public. Even Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, usually so unstinting and generous in her praise, was somewhat dubious as to the merits of the work. Brahms, however, was convinced that the symphony was a worthy one, and time, commonly a pretty fair and accurate judge, has proved him to be right. Today the work ranks as the equal of the First and Second. If, at the first hearing, it



lacks the instant appeal of the other symphonies, subsequent hearings will yield delights fully as rare and precious.

Begun in 1884, the symphony was completed the following year. The first performance was given at Meiningen, October 25, 1885, with either Brahms or Hans von Bülow conducting—some say one, some the other. In January, 1886, the Symphony in E Minor was given at Vienna, but with only moderate success. This symphony, incidentally, was the last of his orchestral compositions that Brahms heard; much has been made of that memorable performance in 1897 at a Philharmonic concert in Vienna. Richter gave a superlative performance of the work, a large and enthusiastic audience was on hand, and Brahms, close to death, very ill and showing plainly the effects of his illness, was seated in a box. Such situations afford the biographers rich material with which to floor their readers. Fairly restrained descriptions of this performance can be found in Florence May's *Life of Johannes Brahms* and in Richard Specht's *Johannes Brahms*, but even so it is all very sad and tear-provoking for the easily affected.

Max Fiedler, who was born in 1859 and conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1908 to 1912, has been selected to conduct this recording, and his qualifications are easily apparent. His performance is, on the whole, an admirable one. Well-balanced, sane and thoughtfully planned, his reading contains plenty of power; moreover, he doesn't distort the music by over-emphasizing certain passages, and the whole thing is carried through with intelligence, spirit and impressive skill. Not by any means a sensational reading, it is a thoroughly appropriate and just one. So, for that matter, was Hermann Abendroth's performance for Victor. The latter's, of course, will be subjected to comparison with Fiedler's version. The differences, however, are minor ones, and as both are well played and adequately recorded, it would be a ticklish matter to recommend one in preference to the other. That, very plainly, is a matter for the potential buyer of the work to decide for himself.

The second section of the second theme of the first movement, given to the violoncellos and horns, with the violins playing *pizzicato*, comes out smoothly and cleanly on the records. The first subject of the second movement, *Andante moderato*, played by two horns and later taken up by the flutes, oboes and clarinets, is equally well played, and the instruments have been recorded with fine certainty and accuracy. The scherzo, marked in the score *Allegro giocoso*, begins with a rugged theme announced by the full orchestra. Fiedler's treatment of this movement is especially commendable, for he could have, had he so wished, spoiled it for most of us by a too earnest attempt to impress with his own virtuosity. As it is, the blending of vigor, jovial humor and delicacy is admirably conveyed. The Finale, generally considered a passacaglia, though some insist that it is a chaconne, forms a magnificent close to a magnificent work, and here again Fiedler shines, competently but not ostentatiously. The recording is generally very good, though now and then detail is lost or obscured through vague, uncertain reproduction. But such spots are happily rare, and the work as a whole can be highly, even enthusiastically, recommended as one of the most rewarding releases of recent months. The movement from the Quartet in A Minor is reviewed under Chamber Music.

Mengelberg's version of the *Academic Festival Overture* completely dwarfs other records now available of this piece. He tackles it with all his usual vigor and gusto, and the result is thoroughly enjoyable. Fritz Stiedry's performance was reviewed in the July issue on page 171, where a brief description of the Overture was given. The recording of the Concertgebouw Orchestra is genuinely remarkable, and the two discs rank among the finest of Mengelberg's recordings. . . . The third movement from the First Symphony, which occupies the odd side of the set, was not an altogether happy choice, for it has already been done several times; moreover, single movements, in these days of complete recordings, are not calculated to arouse much enthusiasm.



BERLIOZ

V-W1100

to

V-W1105

IMPORTED

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE, Op. 14. Twelve sides. Paris
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux.
Six 12-inch discs in album. \$12.

Miniature Score: Eulenberg No. 422.

Whenever Berlioz, in his hectic dash through life, chanced to ricochet off anything particularly interesting, sparks of a marvelous hue flew out; sparks in sound that have been the worry of all slow plodders ever since. He moved so rapidly that he never had a chance to cool off, and everybody coming in contact with him was singed, that is unless that body happened to be an iceberg like Cherubini or Fetis or Mendelssohn, who was a dish of melted ice cream with a few interesting nuts floating about in it. These three in their hostility to Berlioz set the fashion for all academic snobs: Mendelssohn is reported to have said: "I cannot conceive anything more insipid, wearisome and Philistine, for with all his efforts to go stark mad, he never once succeeds." However, Henrietta Smithson was no iceberg, and she proved most interesting to Berlioz, who saw this Shakespearian actress in 1827 and promptly fell positively ill with love for her. The *Symphonie Fantastique* was the result, and in it he poured all his longing desire and despair of fulfillment. It has been called his most uncompromising piece of program music, and for an adequate understanding of the work a knowledge of the underlying story is necessary.

The symphony falls into five well defined movements. The whole work is subtitled *An Episode in the Life of an Artist*. The first movement, *Reveries and Passions*, depicts a luckless youth dreaming of his beloved, and later in the throes of agonies of desire, after which follows *A Ball* (second movement), where everything goes along in gay style until the ache for the beloved upsets matters. Next morning (third movement) the youth is wandering about alone in the meadows, listening to shepherd pipes and seeking pastoral serenity, but all this is violently interrupted by disturbing thoughts of the unattainable beloved. This movement, *Scene in the Meadows*, ends with one shepherd being answered by an ominous roll of thunder instead of by his fellow shepherd, a naïve touch on the part of Berlioz indicative of a black outlook. Between this third movement and the next the youth takes what he deems to be poison, but as this happens to be but a strong dose of opium the youth is the victim of fearful visions wherein he murders



the beloved. The fourth movement is a *March to the Scaffold*, where the boy sees himself dragged to execution amid the jeering of the Paris mob—he sees himself actually guillotined! Lastly we get *A Witch's Sabbath* comprising a hags' dance, a mock Requiem and Doomsday.

Symphonic form in the accepted sense is almost totally absent, but the whole work is held together by a motif, the *idée fixe*, the symbol for the beloved which occurs in every movement, always as a disturbing element. Its first appearance is at the opening of the second record side of this set and its most telling appearance precedes the fearful fall of the guillotine when the luckless boy gives one last thought to his beloved. In the Finale it is "guyed" into a hideous witch's dance.

This recording is the most satisfactory to date, the brilliant orchestration being realized and the macabre picture vividly conjured up with the spicy zest that can be expected from Pierre Monteux.

LAURENCE POWELL

BEETHOVEN { **EGMONT: Overture.** Two sides. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.
V-7291 { One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 44.

Mengelberg's reading of the *Egmont* Overture has not the vigor and power that he injected into his version of Beethoven's First, reviewed here last month, and this in spite of the fact that the *Egmont* is a far more vigorous and powerful piece of music. The record is a good one, but in no way outstanding. Indeed, save in the matter of reproduction, which in spots is cleaner and more exact, it is not strikingly better than Mengelberg's early electrical recording of the same piece, made with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Julius Prüwer's superlative performance with the Berlin Philharmonic remains far and away the finest *Egmont* to date. Quite often, these days, we are afforded the opportunity of hearing Mengelberg with two different bands—the New York Philharmonic-Symphony and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. For some reason or other he nearly always seems to obtain far more effective results with the latter organization; and in consequence it is with it that he has made his most notable records. With the Philharmonic-Symphony his finest achievement was Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*, and that, of course, was magnificent; but it was an exception rather than the rule. Compare, for example, this *Egmont* with the same conductor's *Academic Festival*.

PIERNÉ { **SERENADE.** (Pierné) Victor Concert Orchestra. One side
ELGAR { and
V-22599 { **SALUT D'AMOUR.** (Elgar, Op. 12) One side. Victor String Ensemble. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Neither of these pieces seemed particularly necessary. Elgar's early indiscretion, indeed, ranks with *Souvenir* and Albéniz' *Tango* so far as the number of recordings of it is concerned. Both are played much as one would expect them to be. Shilkret conducts the concert orchestra, Bourdon the string ensemble. For further information the reader is referred to page 502 of the February issue.

TSCHAIKOWSKYB-90126
and
B-90127

CAPRICCIO ITALIEN. Three sides and
EUGENE ONEGIN: *Polonaise*. One side. Berlin State Opera
Orchestra conducted by Alois Melichar.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.



Miniature Score: Eulenberg No. 802.

Tschaikowsky's *Italian Caprice*, written after one of his visits to that lovely land, has been recorded several times, and all of the versions have been good ones—good, that is, in that they set forth the music, which is of the sort that needs only to be recorded once, plausibly, realistically, and accurately. Perhaps the Philadelphia Orchestra's set leads the available versions; it is a dazzling piece of recording and playing. This new one by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, under Melichar, for those who haven't the piece and still enjoy its broad, commonplace melodies, can be safely recommended, however, as an excellent recording and first-rate interpretation.

On the odd side of the set is the *Polonaise* from *Eugene Onegin*, a delightful little bit that has not, like so much of Tschaikowsky, been done to death. So much attention has been devoted to Tschaikowsky's better known orchestral works that it would be refreshing if the companies would explore, for a change, his operas, songs, chamber music and lesser known orchestral works. Such investigations in the past have revealed some charming pieces—for example, the recent recordings of the lovely Quartet in D Major, played by the Budapest String Quartet, and the effective Theme and Variations from the Suite No. 3 in G, played by the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Landon Ronald. Tschaikowsky had many faults, but he was by no means a one or two work composer.

MARINUZZIV-S10226
IMPORTED

SUITE SICILIANA: (a) *Canzone dell'emigrante*; (b) *Valzer Campestre*. Two sides. Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by Vincenzo Bellezza.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Gino Marinuzzi, who is ranked as one of the finest of Italian conductors, was born in Palermo in 1882. Making his début at the Massimo in Catania, he quickly acquired a considerable reputation, appearing at the Teatro Real at Madrid, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and the Scala in Milan. Marinuzzi has also been active in South America, and in 1920 he succeeded Cleofonte Campanino as artistic director of the Chicago Opera Association. Returning to South America in 1921, he went thence to Turin. Marinuzzi occupies a position of some importance among modern Italian composers; he has written, in addition to various instrumental and vocal works, the operas *Barberina*, produced at Palermo in 1903, and *Jacquerie*, given at Buenos Aires in 1918. . . . The *Suite Siciliana* as recorded here is in two parts: *Valzer Campestre* and *Canzone dell'Emigrante*. It is enjoyable music, felicitously orchestrated, attractively written and well adapted for ears that, however so willing, somehow rebel at much that is turned out today. Vincenzo Bellezza, a familiar figure at the Metropolitan in New York, conducts the Covent Garden Orchestra through the piece, and his reading is smooth and effective. The recording sets forth the work clearly.



**LISZT
D'INDY**

C-DX110
and
C-DX111

IMPORTED

MEPHISTO *Valse*. (Liszt) One side and

FERVAAL: *Introduction*. (d'Indy) One side. Brussels Royal
Conservatoire Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

This appears to be the first orchestral recording of the *Mephisto Valse*, which forms the second part, *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke*, of Liszt's *Zwei Episoden aus Lenau's Faust* for orchestra. The title, today, is somewhat misleading, for it is an extremely tame piece of music—tame, that is, in the sense that it doesn't evoke, at least to modern ears, very diabolical images. But it is an ingenious piece, solidly constructed, and it is pleasant to have something from Liszt besides the Hungarian Rhapsodies. The Brussels Orchestra, under the capable Désiré Defauw, gives an energetic performance, and the recording is carefully done.

The release is doubly interesting, moreover, in that it carries on the odd side what appears to be the first recording of a work by Vincent d'Indy, who, for unfathomable reasons, has been completely neglected by the recording companies. Such a state of affairs is all the more puzzling when one realizes that the French manufacturers have been unusually generous with native composers, frequently taking long chances on little known works in order to give French musicians a hearing. Such a policy, of course, is eminently proper and might well be emulated by the manufacturers of other countries. At any rate, it is gratifying to find that d'Indy has at last been given some attention—even though it be only one record side.

He was born in Paris in 1851. His output has been considerable, and portions of it have been played at various times by our American symphony orchestras. D'Indy's writings on music, too, have been numerous and meritorious, and among them are excellent studies of César Frank and Beethoven, as well as his important *Cours de composition* (two volumes).

The present selection is the Prelude to his opera *Fervaal*, which was composed between 1889 and 1895 and first produced at Brussels in 1897. The work is in three acts and a prologue. The Prelude given here is a lovely bit, lofty but readily comprehensible, and the muted strings come out very effectively in the recording.

**GOUNOD
PIERNÉ**
B-90128

FUNERAL MARCH OF A MARIONETTE. (Gounod)
One side and

MARCH OF THE LITTLE TIN SOLDIERS. (Pierné) One
side. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Albert Wolff's choice of recording material can hardly be commended this month, but his treatment of these thrice familiar numbers is admirable. *The Funeral March of a Marionette* and *March of the Little Tin Soldiers* are pleasant enough at the first few hearings, but they are made of very transparent and perishable materials, and so re-recordings serve no useful purpose. In all fairness, however, it should be added that the disc is a lively and first-rate piece of recording.

R. STRAUSS

C-LX60

IMPORTED

ROSENKAVALIER: *Waltzes*. Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. One 12-inch disc. \$2.



While nothing less than a reasonably complete recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* will be satisfactory to many of us, it is pleasant to have, now and then, an excerpt or so, superlatively done. The excellent Brunswick recording of the trio and duet which close the opera, reviewed on page 141 of the June issue, was one of the finest operatic recordings of the year, and this version of the familiar but unfailingly delightful waltzes seems destined to occupy a similarly high place in the season's orchestral recordings. Following the style of the waltz as established and made world famous by the incomparable Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss has added to the form his own wealth of orchestral color, decking out the fragrant and lilting tunes with all sorts of effective devices. The waltz has suffered some hard knocks in the past few years, but despite the heavy inroads made by the foxtrot and the tango it still remains the most graceful and pleasing dance form. That the pieces of Johann Strauss still retain their popularity demonstrates the intrinsic worth of the form. . . . The Berlin Philharmonic, under Walter, tosses off the waltzes from *Der Rosenkavalier* delightfully here. The recording, too, is smooth and full, giving each instrument, or group of instruments, approximately its proper value.

WAGNER

C-G50275D

and

C-G50276D

DIE MEISTERSINGER: *Prelude*. Three sides and
DIE MEISTERSINGER: *Prelude to Act 3*. One side. Sym-
phony Orchestra conducted by Max von Schillings.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Miniature Scores: Eulenburg Nos. 665 and 825.

The *Meistersinger* Prelude has been recorded several times, and some of these versions have certain undeniable merits, but none of them, unfortunately, can be called altogether satisfactory. Perhaps Karl Muck's performance for Victor more nearly approaches perfection than the other available versions. His reading is a superb combination of buoyancy and good taste, but the recording, despite its fine clarity and smoothness, lacks the fullness essential to a convincing reproduction of the piece. The other versions vary in merit, but they all have one thing in common: they all contain more flaws than virtues.

Max von Schillings, now in the United States on tour with the German Opera Company, is a fine Wagnerian conductor. These discs of his, originally issued some time ago by Odéon and now repressed by Columbia and generously included in the popular price series, constitute a really excellent *Meistersinger* Prelude. Although they lack the polish and smoothness found on Muck's discs, they make up for this in part by their strength, verve and fine vigor. The recording, moreover, is impressively full, and it is also clear and fairly smooth. The discs would be good ones at any reasonable price, but at \$1.25 each they represent a definite bargain. If they do not give us a completely satisfying Prelude, that is unfortunate but surely not a plausible cause for undue lamentations. An entirely satisfactory *Meistersinger* Prelude is bound to appear sooner or later, and in the meantime we can enjoy such pleasures as those afforded by anticipation. . . . A sonorous Prelude to the third act of the music drama fills out the set.



CONCERTO

BRAHMS

V-8208

to

V-8211

DOUBLE CONCERTO *in A Minor*, Op. 102. Eight sides. Pablo Casals (Violoncello), Jacques Thibaud (Violin) and Pablo Casals Orchestra of Barcelona conducted by Alfred Cortot. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-99. \$10.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 723.

Victor's release of Brahms' Double Concerto for violin, violoncello and orchestra is a welcome one, for it makes generally available one of the finest sets issued in Europe last year. Bringing together once again that extraordinary trio, Casals, Thibaud and Cortot—the latter directing Casals' excellent Barcelona orchestra—the set presents a magnificent work beautifully played. There is an abundance of Brahms' music this month: besides the Double Concerto, new recordings of his Symphony No. 4, the *Academic Festival* Overture and several piano pieces are put out by the various manufacturers and reviews of them will accordingly be found elsewhere in this issue. Any month in which Brahms is the salient figure on the lists becomes, naturally and inevitably, a salient month; and it is a significant fact that there were several such months during the past year. The Double Concerto was reviewed on page 47 of the April, 1930, issue of *Disques*, when it first appeared as an imported set.

STRAWINSKY

C-67870D

to

C-67872D

CAPRICCIO *for Piano and Orchestra*. Six sides. Igor Strawinsky (Piano) and Straram Orchestra conducted by Ernest Ansermet.

Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 152. \$6.

Strawinsky's *Capriccio* has aroused considerable discussion since it was first performed in America by the Boston Symphony Orchestra a month or so ago. A week or two before the actual performance, the imported records of the work were available. Now the local Columbia Company issues them in its Masterworks series. The *Capriccio* was reviewed by Laurence Powell on page 452 of the January issue.

WEBER

C-D19318

IMPORTED

CONCERTO NO. 2 *for Clarinet in E Flat*. Two sides. Musique de la Garde Republicaine (Recit: M. Verney; Polonaise: L'Ensemble des Clarinettes) under the direction of Pierre Dupont. One 10-inch disc. \$1.

Heinrich Joseph Baermann (1784-1847), a famed clarinetist, was an intimate friend of Mendelssohn and Weber, who both wrote various clarinet-pieces for him. Among the numerous works that Weber composed for and dedicated to Baermann is this Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet. It is rather dramatic in character, with several showy passages for the solo instrument. The arrangement used here is that of E. Grossin. The recording is clear.

ELGAR

C-DX117

to

C-DX120

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN E MINOR, *for Violoncello and Orchestra*,
Op. 61. Eight sides. W. H. Squire ('Cello) and Hallé Or-
chestra conducted by Hamilton Harty.
Four 12-inch discs in album. \$8.



This is a much slighter thing than the great Violin Concerto and rarely reaches the symphonic stride of that other work. It is remarkable for its satisfying breadth of melodic conception and its absence of that irritating mannerism of Elgar, sequential repetition *ad nauseam* that has marred many a fine movement in other works. But in spite of the coherence of the musical thinking within each movement, and in spite of hardly a break between the four movements, and in spite of the fact that earlier thematic material reappears in a cogent way in later movements, this concerto tends to leave an impression of scrappiness until we reach the more extended Finale, when we take in a deep breath and say: "At last he's got going." But there may be an artistic reason for this, and this very restlessness may be part and parcel of the expression of the whole. One might flippantly call this work "Job and his Comforters"—the 'cello being Job and the orchestra his well-meaning but mistaken comforters. The 'cello seems to be groaning under the weight of some affliction, not agitated but brooding heavily, while the orchestra seems to be endeavoring to dispel the gloom, not boisterously but tactfully: the 'cello is a seedy old philosopher who needs careful handling. Finally, in the last movement, the orchestra succeeds and goes rather wild with pride at its success, for the old philosopher does take on a merrier mood, and it is just at this point that we take in a breath of satisfaction, namely when the orchestra takes on a bigger and more confident stride. It now becomes apparent that the brevity and scrappiness of the former movements were simply in keeping with the 'cello's restlessness which was chivied and chased from one idea to another by an overweening circle of comforters. But the confident stride does not last long, because the 'cello suddenly collapses so thoroughly that the orchestra at last gives up hope and even becomes infected: some music of very poignant beauty follows. This should continue to the end, but Elgar has thought fit, I suppose as a concession to the demands of conventional form, to end the concerto with a sudden and very irrelevant outburst of the energetic optimism of the opening of the Finale.

The thematic material is always beautiful and shows no trace of the pompous John Bullish stuff that has unfortunately gained such popularity in the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches and given a very wrong impression of the real Elgar who is not a Sousa but a mystic comparable to Franck. This concerto, composed in 1919, is the epitome of this mysticism which appears to deepen as Elgar dreams through the Autumn of his life. The recording is most excellent, giving us every quality of Britain's best orchestra and all the benefits of a performance in Free Trade Hall, Manchester. The hall echo is perfect and is recorded faithfully: there is none of that stuffy, boxed-up, nasal feeling that too often distinguishes a phonograph performance from one in concert. Mr. W. H. Squire has proved that he can pierce to the core of Elgar's meaning, and his playing alone makes this a memorable set.

LAURENCE POWELL



CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN

C-67873D

and

C-67874D

GRAND FUGUE, Op. 133. Four sides. Lener String Quartet.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 325.

It seldom pays to give too much attention to an opinion whose main virtue is that it is hoary with age. If, for example, we listen too closely to what critics in the past say of this Grand Fugue, which was originally written as the Finale of the Quartet in B Flat, Op. 130, and later published separately as Op. 133, we are quite likely to dismiss the piece as too dull to warrant our attention. That it isn't, that, on the contrary, it is a thoroughly rewarding piece of music and hence eminently well worth listening to, these records afford abundant evidence. Harvey Grace, in his book on Beethoven, differs with the traditional view, and his estimate is well worth quoting: "Today performances of it [the Grand Fugue] may be heard, though infrequently. A single hearing is likely to leave one convinced that the work is little more than a monstrous freak. Increased study of the score, and of the pianoforte duet arrangement (an invaluable means of getting at the inside of things) soon brings us round to the view that we have here one of Beethoven's greatest works—imperfect, and not well carried out in some of its details, but a truly magnificent creation as a whole. Its weaknesses are: over-insistence in the opening section, by all the parts, of the dotted rhythm; the fact that the second subject, when used in augmentation, is not easily identifiable, and so loses relevance; overmuch repetition (always a risky expedient in a form whose essential quality is continuous growth); too many full closes and pauses towards the end (which induce a feeling of finality too soon); and, above all, undue length. No wonder the publisher of the B flat quartet for which it was designed as Finale protested! Even heard alone, it makes so great a strain on the attention that the hearer can hardly appreciate fully the splendours of the second half. Moreover, it is often too big for its medium. Such music demands not four soloists, but an orchestra. It should be scored, and played in place of a symphony (which indeed it is, of a new kind)."

The Leners fiddle spiritedly and persuasively, giving another of those remarkable interpretations that have made their records almost a necessity in any comprehensive record library. The recording is excellent.

FAURÉ

C-D15218

to

C-D15220

IMPORTED

STRING QUARTET, Op. 121. Six sides. Krettly String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Reviewed in the article, "Gabriel Fauré," published elsewhere in this issue.

CHAUSSON

C-50273D

and

C-50274D

POÈME, Op. 25. Four sides. Georges Enesco (Violin) with piano accompaniment by Sanford Schlusell.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.25 each.



In some quarters César Franck is thought the "father" of impressionism in modern music. The muse, of course, entertains with scandalous looseness, and it may turn out that Franck's connection with the child is only that of an indulgent grandmother. God and the critics alone know. The likeness lies in a sense of freedom from former academic restraint and the application of ideas to music.

It was the latter element in Franck that appealed with such vital force. But in the hands of his disciples it brought on the excesses Satie made so much fun of, and led to the whole reaction against extra-tonal associations in music, which reaction is the phase just passed; passed because it was felt that the baby itself was emptied with the bath-water. After all, ideas in music do not have to be of literary or pictorial origin. It is absurd to take refuge from the literary stench of Strauss and Debussy in contrapuntal wastes and deeds of harmonic derring-do. An art form must condition something besides its own technique.

At this point we must more than ever acknowledge Franck as one of our musical fathers, and it is timely to bring out a work of a pupil and close disciple of his. Not that Chausson imitates Franck. The master is too original to be copied. With Chausson, Franck's ecstasy and unrest become passion and rhapsody. And his mysticism becomes rather a black art, like Scriabin's. But there is the same kaleidoscope of tonalities, the same strong rhythms, and the same arch of phrase.

The *Poème* uses the secrets of the violin so effectively that it has become a part of the virtuoso's repertory. Originally it was written, by the way, for violin with orchestra, but is usually offered, as here, in the piano transcription, and I have heard it several times in eminent recitals; but truly never played in as good taste as Enesco does, at the same time with the flexibility and frenzy it demands.

JOSEPH COTTLER

VIVALDI

C-LFX62

IMPORTED

CONCERTO in D Major, Op. 3, No. 9. Two sides. Maurice Maréchal (Violoncello) and Maurice Faure (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

A note on Vivaldi was included in the review of his Concerto Grosso in G Minor, which was reviewed on page 16 of the March, 1930, issue. The present work forms No. 9 of Op. 3, which consists of twelve concertos for four violins, two violas, 'cello and organ bass. The work, as presented here by the French 'cellist, Maurice Maréchal, is in three movements, *Allegro*, *Larghetto* and *Allegro*. The first and last of these are fast and robust, the second melancholy. This work was the opening number on Maréchal's program at his New York recital, February 4. His playing here is firm and vigorous, and he draws a full, ample tone from his instrument. The recording is correspondingly full and ample, and nothing seems to stand between the interpreter and the listener.



BRAHMS
B-90119

QUARTET IN A MINOR: *Quasi Minuetto*, Op. 51, No. 2.
Buxbaum String Quartet. One side and
SYMPHONY NO. 4 in *E Minor*, Op. 98. Last side. Berlin
State Opera Orchestra conducted by Max Fiedler.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

This third movement from Brahms' Quartet in A Minor occupies the last side of the album containing Brahms' Fourth Symphony, reviewed this month under Orchestra. The Buxbaum String Quartet has already recorded, for Polydor, the entire Quartet in A Minor (PD-95121 to PD-95124), and this single movement seems to be the same recording as that in the complete set. The playing is first-rate, and so is the recording. One wonders, though, precisely why it was chosen to fill out the album. Such a policy, if pursued too far, will be bound to cause complaints.



PIANO

CHOPIN
C-17018D
and
C-17019D

FANTASIA in *F Minor*, Op. 49. Four sides. Marguerite Long
(Piano). Two 10-inch discs. \$1 each.

Mme. Long's interpretation of this work and her equally admirable reading of Chopin's Concerto in F Minor, both of which appeared last season in imported pressings, established her as one of the most competent pianists now recording. So many of Chopin's slighter pieces are recorded and re-recorded *ad nauseam* that it is pleasant to get, now and then, one of his more important pieces, appropriately played and recorded. Mme. Long's interpretation is nicely adjusted to the mood of the work, and the recording likewise is excellent. A detailed review of the set was given on page 179 of the July, 1930, issue of *Disques*, when the imported pressing appeared.

BRAHMS
C-LX70
IMPORTED

BALLADE in *D Minor* (Edward). One side and
INTERMEZZO NO. 4 in *B Flat Major*. One side. Harriet
Cohen (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The Ballade that Miss Cohen plays here is the first of the four Ballades, comprising Op. 10, that Brahms wrote about 1854 and dedicated to the composer, Julius Grimm. They were published in 1856. The Intermezzo is No. 4 of Op. 76, entitled *Klavierstücke*, which consists of two books of capricci and intermezzi. These pieces are apparently new to the phonograph, and hence are to be welcomed cordially. They are lovely little works, and Miss Cohen plays them with warmth, sympathy and thorough understanding. The recording is very fine.

OPERA



CABALLERO

V-90025

to

V-90028

LA VIEJECITA: *Zarzuela*. Eight sides. Mercedes Melo, Mary Isaura, Manuel Gorgé, Pedro Vidal, Ignacio Cornadó, Enrique Parra, chorus and orchestra conducted by Mtr. Gelabert. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set S-7. \$5.50.

LÉHAR

V-30214

to

V-30219

THE COUNT OF LUXEMBOURG: *Operetta*. Twelve sides. Margarita Cueto, María T. Mejía, José Moriche, Héctor de Lara, Juan Pulido, chorus and orchestra conducted by Eduardo Vigil y Robles. Six 10-inch discs in album. Victor Set S-8. \$5.

The Victor export list is rapidly developing into a rich store-house for those seeking good light music. We have already had, in the past few months, three zarzuelas from that source: Vives' *Bohemios*, Caballero's *El Dúo de la Africana* and Arrieta's *Marina*. Caballero's delightful *El Dúo de la Africana* was reviewed on page 471 of the January issue, where a brief note on the composer was included. Substantially the same performers render here another of his zarzuelas, *La Viejecita*. *La Viejecita* may be every bit as good a zarzuela as *El Dúo de la Africana*, but of the recorded excerpts, those of the latter are much to be preferred. The recording of *El Dúo de la Africana* was filled with sparkling tunes, and the whole thing was characterized by a liveliness, vigor and abandon that are lacking in *La Viejecita*.

There are, to be sure, enjoyable moments in these records—the *Minueto*, for example, is a lovely and ingenious piece of music,—but somehow things never seem to get started properly. The tunes are not so attractive as those in *El Dúo de la Africana*, nor does the piece hold together so well. The performance, however, is deft and animated, and the recording is excellent in every respect.

The *Count of Luxembourg* seems to be the first of Franz Léhar's operettas to get between the covers of an album, and it is odd that the first attempt should be made by Spanish artists, singing in Spanish. This recording was made by the same orchestra and artists who recorded the two act zarzuela, *Marina*, reviewed in this place last month. The fact that the piece is sung in Spanish, however, isn't of much consequence, and the artists who render the work seem to have absorbed the spirit of the Viennese operetta admirably. There have been plenty of Viennese operettas written since Johann Strauss died, but no one has been able to make much of an improvement on his charming pieces. Léhar is one of the most competent and popular of contemporary composers of light music, and the *Count of Luxembourg* ranks in public esteem with the *Merry Widow* and *Gypsy Love*.

These records make pleasant enough listening. The performers are very good, and they sing the waltzes and gay tunes with which the piece abounds with the requisite verve and animation. There is, moreover, no spoken dialogue, all of the record sides being devoted to the music, and that, most people agree, is by all odds the most effective way to record such works. The reproduction is first-rate.

Musical Masterpieces

Double Concerto in A Minor for Violin, 'Cello and Orchestra (Brahms, Op. 102). Played by Jacques Thibaud and Pablo Casals, with the Pablo Casals Orchestra of Barcelona conducted by Alfred Cortot, on four 12-inch Victor Records in Album M-99 (Nos. 8208-8211), and in automatic sequence Album AM-99 (Nos. 8212-8215). List price, \$10.00.

This composition, which was the last written by Brahms for orchestra, will be hailed with genuine delight by music lovers, for opportunities to hear it are rare. Its difficulties are tremendous. Brahms composed it for Joachim and Hausmann, not forgetting for a moment the technical equipment of these two friends. The result was that for years few artists cared to attempt it publicly. As a matter of fact it requires players who not only have great technical and interpretative ability, but who have also been accustomed to playing together, so that the unity and flow of melody will not be broken. To assemble three artists more thoroughly in musical sympathy with each other than those who have recorded the work would be a difficult task. If you like Brahms . . . if you are one who awaits the slow movements in his symphonies with bated breath . . . you have a real treat ahead of you in the second movement of this concerto! And the finale, quite Gypsy-like in character, is but another instance in which the composer shows the influence of his association with Remenyi.

Requiem Mass by Verdi. Sung by Maria Fanelli, Irene Minghini-Cattaneo, Franco Lo Giudice, and Ezio Pinza, with Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala under the direction of Carlo Sabajno, on ten 12-inch Victor Records, Album M-96 (Nos. 9831-9840), and in automatic sequence, Album AM-96 (Nos. 9841-9850). List price, \$15.00.

This Mass, which was begun to honor the memory of one Italian, was completed in honor of another. Verdi used his contribution to the Rossini Mass, *Libera Me*, in the Manzoni Mass, as this Requiem is sometimes called. It dates from his Aida period . . . and although critics were harsh at first, calling the work too theatrical, the real worth of the music has given it the standing it so justly deserves. A recently awakened interest in the Mass makes the release of this recording, so splendidly interpreted by these artists, especially significant.



Victor Division
R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey
A Radio Corporation of America Subsidiary

DELIBES
V-1502

{ LAKME: Act 2—*Bell Song*. Two sides. Lily Pons (Soprano)
with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.



Of Mlle. Lily Pons' sensational New York success—a success, incidentally, which was subsequently repeated in Philadelphia, where she was received with similar enthusiasm—there is little need to remark here. The daily papers, in broadcasting the details of Mlle. Pons' triumphs, have performed their duties efficiently and thoroughly, so that the young French artist's position in America seems securely established. Perhaps the most refreshing thing about her success is that it was honestly earned; before her début the publicity men somehow forgot to go through their usual maneuvers. The critics and the public alike have discovered in her pretty nearly all the qualities essential for a coloratura soprano's success; and some have found in her a quality even rarer—in the phrase of one prominent critic, "a consummate musical taste." An interview with Mme. Pons is printed elsewhere in this issue.

Last month Victor released her recording of the Mad Scene from *Lucia*, the opera in which she made her first American success. It was a good record, and displayed Mlle. Pons' abilities to excellent advantage. The Bell Song from Delibes' opera, *Lakmé*, affords her another opportunity to exhibit her vocal abilities; and she negotiates the familiar tricks effortlessly and with impressive skill and charm. It is to be hoped that the recorders, having given us examples of her work in the more florid pieces, will next let us hear her in something less fancy.

VERDI
V-8194

{ I LOMBARDI: Act 3—*Qual volutta trascorrere*. One side and
ATTILA: Act 3—*Te sol quest' Anima*. One side. Elisabeth
Rethberg (Soprano), Beniamino Gigli (Tenor) and Ezio Pinza
(Bass) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.50.

These trios come from two of Verdi's earlier operas, both of which were immensely popular during the composer's lifetime; *I Lombardi*, indeed, is still occasionally played, especially in Italy. The work was first produced at Milan in 1843, and it marked the beginning of Verdi's financial success; for the opera he asked and succeeded in obtaining without noticeable difficulty about \$1350. Compared with the \$30,000 which *Aida* brought in from the Khedive of Egypt in 1871, this sum, of course, is small, but at the time it must have seemed fairly large to Verdi. The work had numerous political allusions—one of the reasons for its pronounced success,—and it experienced some difficulty with the police, who insisted, for propriety's sake, on certain mild revisions. The trio given here is one of those spectacular, melodramatic numbers which Verdi excelled so at writing . . . *Attila*, which was produced at Venice in 1846, likewise represents Verdi's first style, and like *I Lombardi* it, too, contains political allusions. The trio recorded here comes just before the quartet which closes the opera. Both numbers are sung very competently, and the recording is adequate. There is a good orchestral accompaniment on both sides of the disc.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF
MARCH

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Album
No. 24
90114
to
90119
incl.</p> | <p>BRAHMS—SYMPHONY NO. 4—E MINOR—Op. 98
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
MAX FIEDLER, Conductor</p> <p>BRAHMS—QUASI MINUETTO from String Quartet
A Minor—Op. 51, No. 2
BUXBAUM STRING QUARTET (Eyle-Starkmann-Moravetz-Buxbaum)</p> | <p>Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$9.00
Compl. with Album</p> |
| <p>90126
90127</p> | <p>TSCHAIKOWSKY—CAPRICCIO ITALIEN
(Italian Caprice) Op. 45, Three Parts
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
ALOIS MELICHAR, Conductor</p> <p>TSCHAIKOWSKY—EUGEN ONEGIN—POLONAISE
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
ALOIS MELICHAR, Conductor</p> | <p>Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$3.00</p> |
| <p>90128</p> | <p>GOUNOD—FUNERAL MARCH OF A MARIONETTE
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor</p> <p>PIERNE—MARCH OF THE LITTLE TIN SOLDIERS
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor</p> | <p>Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50</p> |
| <p>90129</p> | <p>MOZART—ET INCARNATUS EST—From Mass in C
Minor—Soprano Solo (In Latin) With Orch. Acc.
HEDWIG von DEBICKA
JULIUS PRÜWER, Conductor</p> <p>MOZART—ALLELUJA—Soprano Solo (In Latin)
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MÉHUL
C-LF22
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JOSEPH: Act I—*Récit et air de Joseph*. Two sides. Georges Thill (Tenor) with orchestra under the direction of Eugene Bigot. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.



**MASSENET
THOMAS**
O-123.585
and
O-123.586
IMPORTED

WERTHER: Act 4—(a) *Werther! Werther*; (b) *Et puis, il ne faut pas qu'on vienne encore ici nous séparer*; (c) *Mort de Werther*. (Massenet) Three sides and
MIGNON: *Elle est aimée*. (Thomas) One side. G. Gernay (Soprano), Charles Friant (Tenor) and Chorus of Opéra-Comique with orchestra conducted by G. Cloez.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

CHABRIER
O-188.706
IMPORTED

LE ROI MALGRE LUI: Act 1—*Romance du Roi* and *C'est un ami*. Two sides. Roger Bourdin (Baritone) with orchestra conducted by G. Cloez. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

**LORTZING
ABT**
PD-95350
IMPORTED

DER WILDSCHUTZ: *Heiterkeit und Fröhlichkeit*. (Lortzing) One side and
SOLDATENART: *Einlarge zu Das Glöcklein des Eremiten—Wenn man beim sitzt*. (Abt) One side. Heinrich Rehkemper (Baritone) with orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Etiénne-Nicolas Méhul, French opera composer, was born in 1763 and died in 1817. Of Méhul's numerous compositions, his operas stand out as most important, and it is upon them that his reputation, such as it is, rests. In these dramatic works he introduced many fine orchestral effects and a robust dramatic style. *Joseph*, an opera in three acts, is perhaps his most significant work. Georges Thill, who is to appear with the Metropolitan this year, sings the selection from *Joseph* with ease and vigor. . . . Massenet's *Werther*, a lyric drama in four acts and five tableaux, was adapted from Goethe's novel by Edouard Blau, Paul Milliet and Georges Hartmann. It was first produced at Vienna in 1892, and its first performance in Paris occurred about a year later. Act 4 consists of two tableaux; practically all of the second, Werther's Death, is given here. The singers strive earnestly to give Massenet's superficial and obvious music sincerity and meaning, and Cloez' orchestra renders them valiant assistance. The recording is excellent. . . . The selections from *Le Roi malgré lui* contain music immeasurably superior to the soporific platitudes that spoil the Massenet piece, and Bourdin's interpretation is satisfactory. The disc belongs with the other numbers from this opera that were reviewed in the October issue. . . . Albert Lortzing's *Czar and Zimmerman* has been recorded in an abridged version, and the Overture to the opera has been done several times. *Der Wildshütz (The Proacher)*, first produced in 1842, only enjoyed a moderate success at first, but it is now generally considered his best work. The selection rendered here, *Mirth and Merriment*, is gay and lively, and Rehkemper's stirring baritone is admirably supported by the orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer. . . . Franz Abt, song-writer and conductor, was born at Eilenburg in 1819 and died at Wiesbaden in 1885. He is said to have

Victor Records

The first of the operatic selections listed below is interesting for several reasons. It represents early Verdi. The trio from *I Lombardi*, is acknowledged one of the most famous numbers in the literature of older Italian operas. Incidentally, this opera was revived recently at La Scala. Then, too, there is the magnificent cast . . . one not often available in reality. The second record by Mme. Pons . . . this time the "Bell Song" from *Lakmé* . . . will also be a source of continued delight. Other recordings of great beauty add to the musical value of the list.

I Lombardi—Qual volutta trascorrere
(With Sacred Joy) (Verdi) and

Lakmé—Où va la jeune Hindoue (Bell
Song) (Delibes) and

Attila—Te sol quest' anima (To Thee
My Heart Belongeth) (Verdi). Sung
by Elisabeth Rethberg, Beniamino
Gigli, and Ezio Pinza on Victor Rec-
ord 8194. List Price, \$2.50.

Lakmé—Là-bas, dans la forêt (Bell
Song—concluded). Sung by Mme.
Lily Pons with orchestra on Victor
Record 1502. List Price, \$1.50.

The Ballet Music from Rosamunde
(Schubert-Kreisler) and

Larghetto (Weber-Kreisler). Played by
Fritz Kreisler with piano accompani-
ment on Victor Record 1505. List
Price, \$1.50.

Egmont Overture (Beethoven, Op. 84).
Played by the Philharmonic-Symphony
Orchestra of New York under the di-
rection of Willem Mengelberg on
Victor Record 7291. List Price, \$2.00.



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written over 500 works, comprising more than 3,000 numbers. The song given here, *Soldier's Manner* (Intermezzo from *The Hermit's Bell*), is an attractive piece. As in the Lortzing number, Prüwer's orchestral accompaniment is excellent. The recording on both sides is clear and effective.



VERDI

V-7366

and

V-7367

OTELLO: Act 1—(a) *Una vela!*; (b) *Già neila notte densa*; (c) *Ed io veda fra le tue tempie*; Act 2—*Ora e per sempre addio, sante memorie!* Four sides. Renato Zanelli (Tenor), Margaret Sheridan (Soprano), with La Scala Chorus, Orchestra and Principals conducted by Carlo Sabajno. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Verdi's *Otello*, like his *Falstaff*, is not represented nearly so well as it ought to be in the various catalogues. That the opera lends itself admirably to recording purposes is convincingly demonstrated by the effectiveness of these discs, which derives more from the music itself than from the quality of the performance. The latter is good, but by no means exceptional.

The head has been arranged so that the various selections follow in proper order, which is not the case with the records. Record V-7366 contains the number from the second act and *Una vela!* from act one, while record V-7367 sets forth the duet between Otello and Desdemona with which the first act ends. The tumultuous opening bars of the opera, depicting the tempest, are included in the side containing *Una vela!*, and the music continues to the entrance of Otello, includes his lines beginning with *Esultate!*, and comes to a close some twelve bars later, just before the chorus *Evviva Otello!*. This occupies one side of V-7366. Record V-7367 contains the whole of scene three from act one. Devoted to the love-duet between Otello and Desdemona—which has caused some merriment in certain quarters because it occurs on the ramparts of a fort,—this music represents some of the loveliest and most effective Verdi ever composed. Coming directly after the stormy measures of the preceding scenes, it seems relatively calm and peaceful. This scene, of course, closes the first act.

The reverse side of V-7366, although labelled *Ora e per sempre addio, sante memorie!*, actually begins nearly thirty bars earlier, starting with Otello's angry *Tu? indietro! fuggi!*, and ending with his famous lines *Della gloria d'Otello è questo il fin, è questo il fin.*

Zanelli and Margaret Sheridan, as Otello and Desdemona, are satisfactory, rendering their rôles convincingly. Their work in the duet is commendably restrained, and Zanelli's second act solo is conveyed with the necessary force and conviction. The chorus in *Una vela!* sings with fine vigor and energy, and Sabajno's orchestra throughout is excellent, forming a solid and swiftly moving background to the soloists. The recording, too, is well-balanced and clear. Both discs come from the current Victor export list, which also offers recordings of Cabellero's *La Viejecita* and Léhar's *The Count of Luxembourg*, both reviewed in this issue.

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GREGORIAN

V-AE3302

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ALLELUIA: *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. One side and
KYRIE (*Altissimus*). One side. Gregorian Singers of Monastery
of Montserrat, Spain, with organ accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Solesmes Gregorian Chant records which were released some months ago served to arouse considerable interest in the subject of Liturgical music among choirmasters and organists. The interest was not confined to the Ecclesiastical world however, for many lovers of music in its varied forms were quick to appreciate the beauty of the archaic melodies rendered with such finesse and artistic insight by the Monks of Solesmes. This interest has grown with the release of records of the Chant sung in the various monasteries throughout the world. The Benedictine Monks of Beuron, the choristers from the Paderborn Cathedral, the monks of Maria Laach and lastly the Gregorian singers of the Monastery of Montserrat, in Spain, have all contributed to this Gregorian renaissance. The Montserrat Choir is heard in the *Alleluia* from the Pentecost Sunday Mass. This is one of the elaborate Responsorial chants used in the liturgical services of the Catholic Church and is more florid in character than the *Kyrie* or the syllabic hymns. Many of the phrases are sung on one vowel and there is real jubilation in the rise and fall of the exquisite melodies. The text is clearly enunciated, and there is always a nice delicacy and refinement in the interpretation of each phrase. The *Alleluia* is rendered by the men alone with organ accompaniment. In one phrase there is heard a succession of notes that clearly indicates the first approach to the dominant seventh chord. (This chord did not come into use until centuries later.) Throughout the *Alleluia* and the *Kyrie* (which is rendered by the boys and men in alternate fashion) one is impressed by the constant ebb and flow of tone, the legato phrasing and the delicate nuances which characterize the Solesmes interpretations.

The boys' voices in the *Kyrie* are of a silvery ethereal quality without a sign of the harshness or shrillness which so often mars the records of boy choristers. The voices of these lads are also free from the abominable hooty "oo." This falsetto quality was once considered the hall-mark of the artificially-trained boy soprano, but happily more rational methods of boy voice training are making headway not only in England (where this "oo" method originated) but on the Continent and in the United States as well. The recording, on the whole, is well done.

NICOLA A. MONTANI

VERDI

V-9831

to

V-9840

REQUIEM MASS. Twenty sides. Franco Lo Guidice (Tenor),
Ezio Pinza (Bass), Maria Luisa Fanelli (Soprano), Irene
Menghini-Cattaneo (Mezzo-Soprano), with Chorus and Or-
chestra of La Scala Theatre, Milan, conducted by Carlo Sabajno.
Ten 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-96. \$15.

Verdi's Requiem was given by Toscanini at one of his concerts with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra this season. This set was reviewed on page 229 of the August issue of *Disques*.

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PRINCESITA. (Padilla) One side. Dino Gorgioli (Tenor)
with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

MOZART
B-90129

{ MASS IN C MINOR: *Et Incarnatus Est*. One side and
ALLELUJA. One side. Hedwig von Debicka (Soprano) with
orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

The two numbers sung by Dino Borgioli, who is now touring the United States, are attractive but inconsequential. Padilla is the composer of *Valencia*, which created quite a commotion not so long ago. They are effectively presented, with good orchestral accompaniments . . . Hedwig von Debicka's reputation, already of imposing proportions, will probably grow apace with the release of this disc. It is beautifully sung and recorded, and the accompaniment conducted by Julius Prüwer is well up to his standard, which, as has been remarked before in these columns, is an extraordinary high one. The disc was briefly reviewed—from the imported pressing—on page 143 of the June, 1930, issue.

LOEWE
C-50277D

{ DER SELT'NE BETER: *Der alte Dessauer*. Two sides. Ivar
Andresen (Bass) with piano accompaniment by Franz Hallasch.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

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BOND**
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{ A PERFECT DAY. One side and
JUST A WEARYIN' FOR YOU. One side. Anna Case
(Soprano) with piano accompaniment by Carroll Hollister.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The Andresen disc was reviewed on page 429 of the December issue. . . . Anna Case's numbers are well sung and recorded, but that is about all that can be said for them.

WOLF
PD-27186
IMPORTED

{ DER FEUERREITER. One side and
STORCHENBOTSCHAFT. One side. Heinrich Rehkemper
(Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Michael Raucheisen.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Both of these Wolf songs are set to poems by Mörike. The first was written in 1888 for solo voice, but later—in 1892—it was rewritten for mixed voice, chorus and orchestra. The piece is given here in its original form, and probably, so far as the gramophone is concerned, that version is more effective than the later one. Both songs are excellently sung and recorded.

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LARGHETTO. (Weber) One side. Fritz Kreisler (Violin)
with piano accompaniment by Michael Raucheisen.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The graceful Ballet Music to Schubert's *Rosamunde* has often been recorded by various orchestras, and nearly always with fine success. Now Kreisler, momentarily halting the flood of *Midnight Bells*, *Indian Love Calls*, *Dance of the Marionettes* and *Polichinelle Serenades* with which he has been regaling us for some years, utilizes it for one side of the above disc. He plays it delightfully, giving the simple little tune a daintiness and grace that are often lacking in the recordings by the larger orchestras. The Weber *Larghetto* on the reverse side, however, is insipid, and even Kreisler isn't able to make much of it. The recording in both selections is first-rate, as are Michael Raucheisen's nicely adjusted accompaniments.

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BACH
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{ GOYESCAS: Intermezzo. (Granados) One side and
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piano accompaniment by Harry Kaufman.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The accomplished Felix Salmond tosses off these pieces deftly, and he is aided by excellent recording and first-rate piano accompaniment.

ORGAN



BACH
C-2384D

{ FUGUE IN G MINOR (*Entr'acte from Grand Fantasia, Book 2, No. 4*). Two sides. Edouard Commette (Organ).
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Lack of space makes it impossible to give this fine little record its just due of praise. It is highly recommended.

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CORRESPONDENCE



An Apology

Editor, *Disques*:

Mr. Isaac Goldberg, in his letter in the last issue of *Disques* replying to my letter in the January number, points out that Van Vechten has not as yet copyrighted the dictionary. I had accused Mr. Goldberg of quoting Van Vechten without due acknowledgement when he referred to the "Great American Composer." I realized too late after I had written this how silly it was. I realized too the seriousness of such a charge. It is, of course, ridiculous to accuse a man of stealing three words such as these, even if they are used in a distinctive way and capitalized. I have already apologized to Mr. Goldberg personally, and now should like to take the opportunity of making that apology public, also of expressing to you my regret for whatever inconvenience the incident might have caused you.

CHARLES H. MITCHELL

Oak Park, Ill.

Wagner Recordings

Editor, *Disques*:

I enclose my check to your order for subscription to *Disques*, which seems to me to fill a need of mine.

In connection with your review of the Victor album of *Siegfried*, I too feel strongly that there is not nearly enough of it. Why is it that the companies, having once got out good records of certain parts, drop them and do not have the same parts recorded anew? For instance, Victor used to have a splendid record by Reiss of Mime's opening monologue in *Siegfried*, "Zwangvolle Plage," as well as a record of the quarrel of the dwarfs in Act II; these are no longer to be had and have never been made on the electrical recording. The German gramophone company issued before the war a complete recording of Siegmund's story in Act I of *Die Walküre*; this passage, one of the most significant of the whole music drama, is now unobtain-

able on any record. I could cite other instances, but I wish we could have a really complete recording of the *Ring*; *Rheingold* in particular has hardly been touched. The present *Siegfried* seems to me quite uneven in quality. The sword forging scene and the scenes in Act III up to and including Brünnhilde's awakening are splendid, especially the scene of Siegfried passing through the fire; on the other hand, the scenes from Act II are distinctly inferior in voices, orchestra, and expressiveness of the singing, to a series of old acoustical recordings by Heinrich Kraus and Marie Dietrich I got in Germany years ago. The last two records of the present *Siegfried* are not so well sung as the old ones (in English) issued by H. M. V. in 1923. And why omit the deeply moving passage ending with Siegfried's thrice uttered cry "Sei mein"! Similarly, I have always thought it too bad that the *Walküre* albums skipped the passage by Wotan just before Brünnhilde's appeal for the fire, beginning "Nicht streb', O Maid," and ending "die Strafe nur muss vollstreckt ich seh'n!"

By the way, referring to p. 415 of *Disques*, I can guarantee that whatever Debussy called himself, he did not call himself "musicien française."

CLIFFORD H. BISSELL

Berkeley, Cal.

"Sentimentality and Music"

Editor, *Disques*:

I do not know who Laurence Powell is, but I do know that his article in the February issue of *Disques* (why not *Discs*?) is one of the best articles that I have ever read on a musical topic (and I have read about everything in English). Had I found nothing else in your first volume, I would have considered the subscription price well spent. I have noted a marked improvement in your magazine during the past three or four months—long may it flourish!

HENRY S. GERSTLÉ

New York, N. Y.

BOOKS

LETTERS OF HANS VON BÜLOW. Edited by Richard Count du Moulin-Eckart. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf*. \$7.50.

COSIMA WAGNER. By Richard Count du Moulin-Eckart. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf*. 2 vols. \$10.

These books are of extraordinary interest not only to those who retain fairly intact their admiration for the works of the man who is perhaps chiefly responsible for the names of Hans von Bülow and Cosima Wagner still holding a significance for us, but also to anyone interested in salient personalities. Whatever their other good and bad qualities, Hans von Bülow and Cosima Wagner certainly were by no means ordinary people. Strong as were their personalities, however, they were as nothing when they came into contact with Wagner's. His absorbed theirs completely, enabling him to take what he wanted of them; and somehow he made them, if not actually like, then at least tolerate it without open rebellion.

Bülow's great tragedies, of course, were his inability to give life to his own musical compositions and his disastrous marriage with Cosima Liszt. A greatly gifted, highly strung man, he was doomed from the start for unhappiness. This is clearly revealed in these letters of his. But luckily he possessed the gift of quick recovery, and in one letter, written shortly after his break with Cosima, we find him in Italy, melancholy but with an appreciative eye for the graceful tricks of a certain ballet dancer. The letters included here are to Richard and Cosima Wagner, Bülow's daughter, Daniela, and his two friends, Klindworth and Bechstein . . . The letters are admirably translated by Hannah Waller and edited by Scott Goddard, who contributes an introduction and some valuable notes. In his introduction, incidentally, Mr. Goddard remarks: "Of Bülow the executant and interpretative artist nothing remains, unless it be sparse and insignificant memories of past concerts, handed down to us, a material altogether too evanescent for the biographer, as it is too vague for the historian.

That is the fate of the great virtuoso—he leaves behind him a fame that owes its continuance to the fleeting memories of minds themselves long since dust." The italics are ours. So far as Bülow and artists of the past are concerned, the sentence is absolutely correct. As it stands, however, it leaves room for considerable argument. Readers of *Disques* do not have to be told why.

As for the two volumes dealing with Cosima, they have already been widely discussed and reviewed. Count du Moulin-Eckart views her in an extremely favorable light. Her relations with Wagner, he believes, had a good effect upon the composer's work, and thus he feels that harsh criticism of her is not justified. His narrative is persuasively written and well considered.

ART-SONG IN AMERICA: *A Study in the Development of American Music*. By William Treat Upton. Boston: *Oliver Ditson Co.* \$3.

Mr. Upton has revealed considerable courage in his selection of a subject, for art-song in America is not a topic calculated to arouse much enthusiasm—save perhaps on the part of the composers of these songs. Frequently, indeed, the subject provokes more merriment than admiration. Whether this is caused by ignorance or lack or presence of critical ability, of course, is a moot question. Generally, however, the matter is not even deemed worthy of argument; it is simply stated that, with a few commendable exceptions, American art-song is abominable, and few care to protest the assertion. Mr. Upton apparently believes otherwise, but one finds no hasty and reckless judgments in his volume. It is plainly the work of a discerning musician and critic, not that of a fatuous patriot. Based on a sound knowledge of his subject and copiously illustrated by more than a hundred quotations from representative songs, his volume covers a vast amount of ground. It begins with Francis Hopkinson, James Bremner, William Selby and P. A. von Hagen, and concludes with Bainbridge Crist and Charles Tomlinson Griffes. Mr. Upton presents his material clearly and engagingly.

